Parental Empowerment –
School Choice Subgroup
Minutes

LEARNS

Meeting Date	June 19, 2023
Attendees	DESE: Darrell Smith, Kayci Hardnett, Ivy Pfeffer, Adrienne Williams Committee Members: Theresa Hall, Chelsie Sturdivant, Charisse Dean, Kristen Hargett, Debbie Jones, John Spencer, Tara Mendoza, Misty Newcomb, John Spencer, Cindy Fong Parthenon: Nita Bhat, Tim Fitzpatrick

Draft Rule/Policy Component	Work Group Feedback
EFA Handbook: School Responsibilities	• The group members reviewed the handbook and terms of responsibilities for private schools before the meeting. They agreed that the eligibility requirements were clear and sufficient. The group came to a consensus that if eligibility requirements became too stringent, this might inadvertently deter private schools from participating in the EFA program. • The group discussed how the EFA rules would be best structured to prevent tuition inflation while allowing reasonable cost increases. • The group discussed similarities between Arkansas's EFA program and similar programs in other states. The EFA program does have a testing requirement, but it was suggested that there be no achievement cutoff scores as the goal is student growth.
EFA Handbook: Family Responsibilities	• The group discussed monitoring support for families. The EFA program is designed to pay vendors directly. The families must submit invoices to Class Wallet and provide the student access to instruction in the four core content areas.
Parent Satisfaction Survey	• The group discussed what information would be most helpful to include in the survey. They agreed that families should have input on which vendors are reputable and which are widely used. They agreed it would be helpful to know if families had the necessary vendors and resources available to them through the EFA program. • It was also noted that it would be helpful to poll on the reason for utilizing the EFA program. (ex: *How many families enrolled their students because of the EFA program? How many families had students who were already enrolled or planned to enroll in private school regardless?*)
Communication/Accessibility	• The group noted that the process, eligibility requirements, and application should be communicated frequently and accessed easily. They also discussed that the application should be relatively simple to complete to ensure that all eligible families have access to the EFA program.

	- It was agreed that a district report to public schools would give good data in understanding why students transition from public school to the EFA program. This can not only help districts plan but can also give insight into what improvements might be made (academic deficits, course offerings, extracurricular options, etc.) - The group noted that the EFA program should have a clear and thorough format for data submission. - The group members discussed the need for financial processes to be as streamlined as possible for families. They also discussed collecting data on tuition costs so that families know early what costs they might be responsible for. This can also help to reveal any barriers to access. - The group discussed whether the fraud reporting hotline should be anonymous and if anonymous what safeguards would be placed to discourage false reporting.

Next Steps	- Review previous meeting notes and slide decks. - Respond to the survey for an in-person meeting date.